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## **Interior Secretary Makes Plans to Manage National Monuments**

**(WASHINGTON)** - Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton announced today her intention to develop plans managing the national monuments established under the Department's jurisdiction in 2000 and 2001.

"It's important that we begin the process of developing plans for managing these national treasures," Norton said. "While I share concerns about the way in which these monuments were created, it's our job now to see that we develop land use plans in an open, inclusive, and comprehensive way." Designations of certain monuments - most of which are located in the American West - had occurred over the objections of some local residents.

In a letter to elected officials in States containing one or more of the 17 national monuments in question, the Secretary promoted the land use planning process as an illustration of her management philosophy. According to Norton, the planning for the future management of these monuments will be a model of "what I call the Four C's: *Consultation, Cooperation, and Communication*, all in the service of *Conservation*. The Department is committed to management and protection of the monuments consistent with the Four C's, our interim management guidance, and the purposes established in the proclamations."

Norton also called on the relevant agencies under her jurisdiction to conduct the planning process with maximum input from local communities. "I am challenging the Bureau of Land Management to make the planning process a model of how to involve the people who live and work closest to these monuments," she said.

BLM Director Kathleen Clarke stated that the BLM will take this opportunity to look at expanded opportunities for direct citizen participation in monument planning and stewardship. "Our door is open," Clarke said. "If the planning and management process for the monuments is to be effective, we must make sure it is citizen centered. We must ensure that local communities have a true stake in these national monuments to guarantee that generations of future Americans can enjoy them too."

Notices published April 24, 2002, in the *Federal Register* formally start the planning at many monuments and provide for a minimum 60-day formal scoping period to identify issues to consider and analyze regarding management at each monument. These notices are available online at [www.nara.gov/fedreg](http://www.nara.gov/fedreg). More information about these national monuments is available on the web at [www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov).

The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages 262 million surface acres, located primarily in 12 Western states, including Alaska. These lands, once remote, now provide the growing communities of the West with open space that gives the region much of its character. The Bureau, which has a budget of \$1.8 billion and a workforce of 10,000 employees, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the Nation. The BLM's "multiple use" mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The BLM accomplishes this by managing for such resources as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, and energy and mineral development that helps meet the nation's energy needs, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on the public lands.

Secretary Norton's announcement means that in Montana, the BLM will begin the formal

scoping phase of developing a long-term resource management plan for the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument.

"The Secretary's emphasis in this announcement matches our intent for a planning process that is open, inclusive and comprehensive. I hope everyone interested in this monument realizes that scoping is an ongoing process for us; it does not close at the end of a meeting," offered Gary Slagel, BLM's monument manager for the River Breaks Monument.

This Notice of Intent allows the BLM's Lewistown Field Office to formalize plans for scoping open houses across north central Montana. Open houses will be scheduled in Winifred, Lewistown, Fort Benton, Great Falls, Havre, Chinook, Malta and Fort Belknap.

"We'll try to allow 4-6 weeks before we schedule these meetings and we'll work with our local media, updates, newsletters, public speaking opportunities, and other means of informing and involving the public with these meetings," Slagel said.

The Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument was designated in January 2001, and includes approximately 375,000 acres of public land. The area was designated to protect its unique cultural, historic, geographic and visual qualities.